

Employee Wellness—A Healthy Investment

As health care costs continue to soar and more companies are limiting health care benefits, the state of Arizona is keeping costs low to employees and placing more of an emphasis on the health and wellness of its employees.

“Preventive and proactive wellness programs like ours are more valuable than ever,” says Emily Augustine, manager of the state’s Employee Wellness program. “Our wellness team is committed to keeping the state’s workforce healthy by investing in our most important asset.”

As part of the Arizona Department of Administration’s Human Resources Division, Employee Wellness debuted in 1990 with the goal of helping to contain employee health care costs. This is still one of the main goals of the program.

“We are now working to expand our Wellness program to target our biggest health care cost drivers to have the greatest impact on the health of our employees,” Augustine explains.

The program currently offers a wide range of classes and screenings at employee worksites across the state. Most classes are free, and others have low co-pays. In addition, free flu shots for employees are offered in the fall of each year, with Family Flu Shot clinics available to employee spouses and dependents for the first time this year.

Saving lives with early detection

The Wellness program invests in the health of state employees by offering important, life-saving screenings at the worksite.

During Fiscal Year 2004-05 alone, more than 14,000 employees participated in wellness screening events at 567 locations statewide.

Health screenings provided by Employee Wellness include:

- Mini-health screenings (checks for cholesterol, blood sugar, blood pressure, percent of body fat and assessments of height/weight/frame size)
- Prostate cancer screening (PSA)
- Osteoporosis screening
- Skin cancer screening
- Mammography screening

Mobile On-site Mammography (MOM), going on its 16th year of operation, covers all of Arizona and is the sole provider of on-site mammography screening for state employees.

According to MOM’s website, www.mobileonsitemammography.com, breast cancer is the leading form of cancer among Arizona women. But this doesn’t have to be the case.

“Early detection is the best defense we have at this time for catching breast cancer in its earliest stages,” says

Catherine Midgette, Executive Vice President of MOM. “If we find the cancer in its earliest stages, the patient has a 97 percent survival rate.”

-continued on page 4



New Look—New Name—wellNEWS

This November issue of the Wellness newsletter is presented with a new name and a whole new look. Formerly “For Your Health and Benefits,” this monthly publication, now named “wellNEWS,” still brings you the same great information from the State of Arizona’s Employee Wellness program.

Have you visited the Wellness website lately? There have also been many new additions and updates to the Wellness program’s online information. Check it out!

Mini Health Screening at Work

All State employees are eligible to participate in mini health screenings. Confidential results will be mailed to your home. These screenings are FREE, except where prices are indicated:

- Height & weight; blood pressure; and percent of body fat (body composition).
- Cholesterol (total panel) and blood sugar **8-hour fasting is required for this blood draw.**
- Free osteoporosis screening for women 40 and older. \$35 for women under age 40.
- \$5 PSA screening (blood draw) for men 40 and older. \$40 for men under age 40.

***NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED!***

Florence - Tuesday November 15, 2005 6:00am-1:00pm Dept of Corrections 1307 E. Butte Ave, Occupational Health Unit

On-Going Wellness Events**Weight Watchers® at Work**

This program is presented as a 10-week series. All non-University employees are eligible to join an "at work" program for \$59.00. Spouses and retirees can attend worksite programs for \$90 plus \$10 for materials. Call Weight Watchers to learn about scheduled events: 602-248-0303, speak to an "at work" representative.

Massage Therapy

This program is open to all State employees. The cost is \$10 for a 15-minute massage and \$20 for a 30-minute massage.

National StresStation will travel to worksites with at least 15 interested employees (and/or family members). Call National StresStation at 480-990-1701 to discuss having this program at your worksite. Also, check the Wellness website for events scheduled in your county.

**Skin Cancer Screening Continues**

Because of the great interest in skin cancer screening, the Wellness program will continue to provide these events in November. All State employees are welcome to participate in this free screening. Skin cancer screening is performed by Banner Occupational Health, and includes:

- Specific assessment by a nurse practitioner or physician assistant. Participants will not be required to fully disrobe.
- Assessments of risk for skin cancer, including personal and family medical histories and lifestyle factors.
- Educational materials and counseling.

Screenings take approximately 10 minutes and they **do require an appointment**, please contact the appropriate person listed below to request an appointment:

Kingman— Wednesday, November 2, 2005
9:00am-3:30pm Dept. of Economic Security 301 Pine Conference Room
Email cortolano@azdes.gov to make an appointment.

Phoenix— Friday, December 2, 2005
8:00am-2:30pm Dept. of Transportation 4550 N. Black Canyon HWY Conference Room
Email JBurciaga@azdot.gov to make an appointment.

Any of these events, plus many others can be hosted at individual worksites across Arizona. If you are interested in having a Wellness event at your worksite, visit the Wellness website to learn



"How To Request and Schedule Worksite Events" or call 602-771-9355.

Avian (bird) flu risk is minimal in the U.S.

There's been a lot of talk lately about bird flu, super-viruses and pandemics. A seemingly endless string of frightening stories has Arizonans concerned and confused about their own risk level and wondering if their government is prepared to respond.

The reality is, at this time there is little to no risk of anyone in Arizona or even in the United States contracting this virus.

Still, the threat of an influenza pandemic has been in the forefront of the state's emergency preparedness and planning efforts for many years and will remain so.

Here's the situation with bird flu: Birds have their own flu viruses just as humans do. Occasionally, such viruses spread from birds to humans.

This is called "jumping the species barrier." This is what has happened in recent years in East Asia. The H5N1 bird flu virus was first identified in poultry in Hong Kong, where it later jumped the species barrier and infected 18 people, causing six deaths in 1997.

This year, the virus has sickened more than 100 people. Half of those have died, making this a significant disease event. With the recent finding of infected wild birds in other parts of Asia and potentially in Europe, the concern for global spread in birds is increasing.

However, those who have contracted this virus have had direct contact with infected birds in East Asia. There is no confirmation of any human-to-human transfer of the virus. The H5N1 virus is not thought to be genetically capable of being transmitted between humans.

Therefore, the person most at risk from getting H5N1 bird flu is the chicken farmer in Vietnam. For residents of Arizona and the rest of the United States, the risk of contracting the virus is almost non-existent.

This current bird flu outbreak has caught the attention of the media and the scientific community because it seems to have some of the same genetic traits as the terrible 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic that reportedly killed 50 million people.

This does not mean that the current bird flu strain will become another Spanish Flu; it means it has the potential to, with the right series of genetic mutations.

The chances of this happening are unknown. It may happen this year or in 100 years, or never.

To say that we are "overdue" for a pandemic flu strain to occur is to say that you are overdue to win the lottery. Both are real long shots, but both are possible. In either case, we need to be prepared.

At the international level, efforts such as the prompt killing and disposal of infected poultry flocks are being taken to help prevent the spread of the H5N1 virus between wild and domestic birds.

At the national level, efforts are being taken to lessen the impact if this becomes a pandemic virus. Vaccines are being developed and anti-viral drugs are being stockpiled.

Unfortunately, neither may be ready or even effective in the event of a flu pandemic and that prospect makes the planning efforts even more challenging. Here in Arizona, we have taken the lessons learned from the containment of SARS and other outbreaks, including the Spanish Flu, to develop local and state pandemic response plans to fit in with the national and international plans.

Surveillance systems and laboratory tests are being developed and improved. Mass vaccination capabilities are being ramped up. Quarantine laws are being reviewed. Hospitals are preparing for a surge of patients. New ways of communicating valuable and timely information to the public are being devised.

Today, we are more prepared than ever to respond to all types of emergencies. Tomorrow, we will be more prepared than today.

In the meantime, there are some simple steps we can take to prevent the spread of another deadly virus: human influenza. It usually doesn't make the headlines, but the ordinary human flu directly affects thousands of Arizonans each year.

Bird flu may have the potential of becoming a major health threat, but human flu will be here soon and it's nothing to sneeze at. Remember: Get your flu shot, cover your cough, wash your hands and stay home if you're ill. While we are preparing for the worst, we cannot fail to be ready for the expected.

For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control's website at www.cdc.gov/flu/avian

-David Engelthaler, State Epidemiologist
Arizona Department of Health Services

2005

wellness information

November is National Diabetes Month

Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Insulin is a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy needed for daily life.

It is estimated that there are over five million people in the United States that have undiagnosed diabetes.

Diabetes is a chronic disease, for which there is no known cure. Don't believe that diabetes is not life threatening. Just because the disease is manageable, that does not mean that it is not life threatening or serious. Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death overall in the United States, and the sixth leading cause of death among other diseases.

"Celebrate" National Diabetes Month this year by getting your blood sugar checked, which is a simple blood test. For more information, including an online diabetes risk test, visit the American Diabetes Association at www.diabetes.org

-employee wellness
cont. from pg 1

Helping employees achieve good health

The Wellness Resource Center, located at 100 N. 15th Avenue in Phoenix, is available for employees to borrow books, videos, and audiotapes at no cost. Online resources are available at www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness, providing links to health information, a monthly newsletter for state employees, and monthly wellness events scheduled throughout the state.

Learn more about how to request and schedule worksite wellness events at www.benefitoptions.az.gov/wellness.

Events are generally scheduled two months in advance.

-Jeri Penrose,
ADOA Communications Coordinator
jeri.penrose@azdoa.gov

"Those who don't make time for wellness will be forced to take time for illness."

-Jeff Null, Manager, Dow Chemical Fitness Center

Flu Shots 2005

The State Flu Shot Program will continue through the month of November. Please visit the Wellness website weekly for the most up-to-date worksite flu shot schedule and eligibility rules.

Great American Smokeout

The Great American Smokeout will take place this year on November 17, 2005. The concept dates from



the early '70s when Lynn Smith, publisher of the *Monticello Times* of Minnesota, announced the first observance and called it "D Day."

The idea spread to various states until in 1977, it went nationwide under the sponsorship of the American Cancer Society.

If past Smokeouts are any indication, as many as one-third of the nation's 46 million smokers could be taking the day off from smoking.

Below are listed two resources to help you in your quit day efforts.

Arizona Smoker's Helpline— www.ashline.org
American Cancer Society— www.cancer.org

Created and published by ADOA Human Resources,
Benefit Options Wellness Program
100 N 15th Ave, Suite 103 Phoenix, AZ 85007
602-771-9355 — email: wellness@azdoa.gov

Persons with disability may request reasonable accommodation by contacting the ADOA Benefits Office. If you need this issue in alternative format, please call 602-542-5008.

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options
wellness!
Be Well Stay Well.